

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, U.S. Representatives Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), Howard Berman (D-CA), John Conyers, Chairman, Judiciary Committee (D-MI) and Linda Sánchez, Chairman, Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law (D-CA) sent the following letter to U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to request more details regarding the dismissal of U.S. Attorney Carol Lam.

Text of the letter:

The Honorable Alberto Gonzales
U.S. Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Gonzales:

Last week, Congressman Emanuel sent you a letter requesting that former U.S. Attorney in San Diego Carol Lam be appointed as outside counsel to finish her work on the Duke Cunningham Case. Unfortunately, your office has not yet responded to that letter.

Two days ago, Lam's investigation continued to bear fruit as a federal grand jury charged Kyle "Dusty" Foggo and Brent Wilkes with at least 11 felony counts related to their involvement with Cunningham. As Elana Schor's article in The Hill yesterday points out, "Justice Department officials have praised the Cunningham probe as the linchpin of their growing pursuit of public corruption cases, yet prosecutor Lam is nonetheless slated to step down[Thursday] after the Bush administration cited unspecified 'performance' issues in requesting her resignation late last year. Six other U.S. attorneys, several involved in ongoing corruption investigations, were dismissed at about the same time."

As you know, of those seven fired U.S. Attorneys, Lam was not the only one investigating sitting public officials before being dismissed. For example, Daniel Bogden of Nevada and Paul Charlton of Arizona were dismissed while their offices were conducting probes concerning elected officials.

Schor's article also notes that Deputy U.S. Attorney General Paul McNulty was scheduled to brief members of the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday with information on the decisions to dismiss the U.S. Attorneys. During last week's public Senate hearing, Deputy U.S. Attorney General McNulty confirmed that Bud Cummins III, the former U.S. attorney for Eastern Arkansas, was dismissed without cause to install Timothy Griffin, a former aide to White House adviser Karl Rove.

Carol Lam's indictments of Foggo and Wilkes underscore the importance of last week's request and the need for an explanation of why these diligent public servants were dismissed. It is vital that U.S. Attorneys be able to prosecute wrongdoing free from political pressure. We are pleased that the Department of Justice has also agreed to brief members of the House Judiciary Committee on the dismissals of Carol Lam and other U.S. Attorneys. We look forward to further details regarding the date for that briefing and your response regarding the request to appoint

Carol Lam as an outside counsel to finish the Cunningham and related investigations.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. We look forward to hearing from your office.

Sincerely,

Rahm Emanuel
Member of Congress

Howard Berman
Member of Congress

John Conyers
Chairman, Judiciary Committee

Linda Sánchez
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law